its potential in growth of export of leather products and generation of employment. With a view to develop and modernize the infrastructure facilities in leather sector for capacity augmentation and aggressive marketing, the Government has initiated a number of measures which *inter-alia* includes Indian Leather Development Programme (ILDP), financial assistance under Assistance to States for Developing Export Infrastructure and allied activities (ASIDE), special focus initiatives as announced in National Foreign Trade Policy 2004-09 and financial support to the exporters under Market Development Assistance Scheme (MDAS) and Market Access Initiative Scheme (MAIS).

Crisis in sugar industry due to ban on export

2278. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ongoing ban on sugar export has put the sugar industry in crisis;

(b) whether it is a fact that a huge quantity of 40 lakh tonnes of sugar has accumulated in factories across the country in addition to the forecast of a bumper sugar crop for this season; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to make use of the 40 lakh tonnes of accumulated sugar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Central Excise Authorities have reported that, as on 30.9.2006, there was a stock of about 43.64 lakh tonnes (provisional) with the sugar mills of the country. However, a quantity of 46.26 lakh tonnes (5.26 lakh tonnes as levy and 41 lakh tonnes as non-levy) has already been released for the months of October to December, 2006.

Special scheme for Agri exports

2279. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state: